462 thank (tlangela) her husband for his kind help! This is her
273 method of notifying him that all the grain has been harvested, as, whatever the man's share of the work may have been, the mealies belong to him.

462 The main work of the man is the *building and repairing of the*
356 *huts*. This is truly an arduous job, but it is not of yearly recur-
342 rence. Every third or fourth year they are obliged to re-thatch the roof. The huts are built and repaired during the winter, from May to September.

A second domain, which is exclusively man's, is the *care of the cattle*; the boys milk the cows, construct and repair the kraal: the little boys herd the goats, and the young men the oxen, as has already been mentioned.

462 It is also the men who *make all the utensils and tools* used in the
411 village, pots and other crockery excepted; mortars, pestles,
294 handles for axes or hoes (mimphinyi), wooden platters, carved or forged articles, all this work pertains to them. They must also make the *ntehe* for their wives, or sisters, after the birth of the babies. This is probably the explanation of the curious fact noticed amongst Native Christians, namely that they are much more clever at needlework than their wives. Big fellows are often seen forsaking the hoe to work with the needle, and there are fathers who make their own clothing as well as the dresses for their wives and children!

462 *Hunting and fishing* are, of course, also men's work... or pastime.
224 For some of them hunting is an actual trade, at least such was the case in former times, before the White Governments imposed strict regulations and levied heavy licences on that sport. We shall study, in Part IV, the curious customs relating to these two favourite occupations of the Natives.

574 A great part of their time is devoted by the men to *paying*
517 *visits*. They are very fond of calling on each other, and sometimes
484 they go great distances to see relatives or friends. They do not travel to pay visits only, but they frequently journey to claim payment of their debts (milandju). To regain the possession of a miserable head of cattle they willingly lose whole weeks! And what endless discussions in the *hubo*, when an unfortunate visitor

301

301 ORNAMENT--types of ornament worn (e.g., necklaces, bracelets, rings, anklets, earrings, labrets, hair ornaments); mode of attachment or suspension; age, sex, and status differences; materials and manufacture; occasions of use; etc. See also:

Work in bone, horn, and shell 323

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

584 shillings ; this present " strengthens their bones " (ba tiya marambo) and nothing further remains to be done but to choose the day on which the betrothal visit shall take place. (1)

2) The betrothal visits (Tjekela and koroka).

584 301 This visit (ku ya ku tjekelen) is paid in the following manner. The fiancé chooses his best friend to be his " shangwane " ; the fiancée does the same on her side, and these two " shangwane " must do their best to help them both during the whole of these complicated ceremonies. Then the bridegroom summons, together with his shangwane, three or four other friends of his own age, and a little lad to carry their mats. They go and bathe and put on their finest attire : rich skins, bracelets hung to their belts, horse-hair necklaces with white beads threaded here and there which swing to and fro on neck and breast. Neither [593] do they forget their small shields of skin, which give them a martial appearance without, however, suggesting any thought of war or strife. Before starting they take a good meal cooked at 584 574 home. In the evening, after sunset, they reach the village of the fiancée. They sit down outside the gate and cough to make known that they have arrived. Then the inhabitants, who were expecting them, come out to meet them and beg them to enter. The visitors make difficulties. They pretend not to wish to do so. The people of the village insist. At last, with apparent reluctance, they advance into the central square. A hut is prepared for them, and they are invited to go and rest there. They begin by refusing. But the young girls take out of their hands their sticks and their miniature shields and carry them into the hut. At last, with a

(1) Amongst the Wa-Nyika (a tribe dwelling between the Nyassa and Tanganyika lakes) the betrothal takes place as follows : A female messenger is sent by the suitor's parents to the girl's parents. She brings with her a hoe. The father calls the girl and shows her the tool saying : " This is your hoe ; it comes from so and so." If the girl looks at the hoe with a gloomy expression and leaves the hut slowly, still looking at it, it is a sign that she does not accept the proposal. Should she on the contrary cover her face with her hands and run away without looking at the hoe, she thus declares that she consents to become the wife of the boy. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, January 1926).

584 In fact this is exactly what the young men want, and the second night is spent like the first.

The third day they go away. All the young girls accompany them along the paths, for a long distance, and, when they part, boys and girls tie together the high standing grasses on the veldt (ku ba mafundju hi byanyi), a touching symbol of their loves! Seeing these knots during the whole season at a crossroads,

Drawing water from the Maputju river. *Phot. A. Burd*

passers-by will know that lovers parted there. On taking leave, the young people arrange another meeting. The girls will go after a week or two to return the visit.

292 301 584 In fact, to the *tjekela* of the boys corresponds the *koroka* of the girls. " They make the betrothal visit to see the husband (ba ya ku koroken, ku ya bona nuna) ". They also put on their finest attire ; red and white cloth, in their curled hair a small crown of blue and red beads, looking really pretty, on ankles and wrists bracelets of twisted iron wire.

l: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

556 595 574 ed by so many good things! Sycophants are not lacking, "Good evening, son of so and so!" they say. "You are one of the great men of the country." And in return for these and other compliments, the magnanimous Gidja shares his feast with his admirers!

Strangers are crossing the country and inquire where they can be received. "Go to Gidja" they are told. "A ni tshengwe, a fuya tshengwe" viz. "he is the possessor of a harem! He is not killed by famine! He has beer to drink every day! He can give food to poor people. Even then, some of it remains on the plate and is eaten by little boys and dogs in the square. There is always abundance there." And the travellers come and enter (khuleka) his village, after which they will tell in their homes the story of the magnificence of Gidja and extol his hospitality.

Thus the man who has succeeded in life becomes famous, his advice will carry weight in the discussions in which he takes part; he will perhaps be even more esteemed than the chief himself, though he does not enjoy the special prestige which the royal family owes to the blood running in its veins.

Conclusion: the greatness of an African is before all else a matter of pots, and the matter of pots is closely connected with polygamy!

885 554 During these years of mature age the evolution of a man is not marked by special ceremonies. There is one custom however which is common to all, and which marks an advance in their social position. It is that of fixing the wax ring.

II. *Fixing the wax ring.*

885 177 554 301 Amongst the South Africans, the crown is not the appanage of royalty. All men having reached mature age have the right to adorn themselves with it. It is true, it is not a diadem of precious stones, but a large ring of wax. This custom seems to have a Zulu origin. The Ba-Sutho do not know it and the Ba-Thonga, who all practise it, have taken it from the conquering tribe which owes its fortune to the famous Chaka. This habit has spread all

l: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

885 177 554 over the country from Maputju to the borders of Gaza, but only during the last hundred years. This black crown is called *ngiyana* (Ro.) or *shidlodlo* (Dj.), and the crowning ceremony is called *khehla*. From this verb has come the term *makhehla*, a name given to all those who wear this ornament.

885 301 527 This ceremony is accomplished in the following way. At a given time, the chief informs all the men of a certain age that they must prepare their rings. The counsellors and the sons of the royal family who belong to this " class " must go to the capital. Several oxen are killed ; the back tendons are carefully preserved and made into strings. This being done, the master hairdressers, that is to say those who know how to fix these strange appendages, are called in.

They come, supplied with small sticks (tinhlamalala, the central nervures of the leaves of the milala palm-tree) which they plait together with these strings made of tendons so as to form the skeleton, the circular frame of the crown. These strings are drawn through the curly hair, all round the head, so as to fix the frame of the crown above the temples. The remaining hair on the sides and behind has been previously shaven. The chief possesses a provision of wax ; the wax which is preferred is not that of bees, but the rosy secretion of certain grubs which is found on some bushes, and which the young boys of the capital go and collect. This wax is mixed with different ingredients to make it black. It is fixed on the frame of sticks and shaped into a large round or oval ring, as black as jet, which can be made to shine brightly. When all is finished, they eat the flesh of the oxen, enjoy themselves, dance and celebrate this great occasion!

885 301 The more humble subjects crown themselves in their own villages, where tonsorial artists come to adorn them. The poor go to the hairdresser, and do not use strings made of tendons (they have no ox to kill), but strings made of the fibres of a palm-tree, which are cheaper. It is said that nowadays palm-tree strings (bukuha) have almost entirely supplanted the others, the more so as they are not spoilt by the washing of the crown ; whilst, if the *ngiyana* is fixed with tendons, no water must fall on it, or it would soften.

Moreover the crown must be taken care of ; it can be spoilt

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

301 and knocked out of shape by a blow or if its owner goes through
885 thorny bushes. A *khehla* who has some self-respect will frequently
554 polish and repair this valuable ornament, for it is a sign of mature
482 age. He who has been ordered by the chief to wear it no longer
645 carries burdens on his head; his crown would be spoilt! He will
461 be accompanied by a boy who carries his parcels; he himself will only carry his stick or his assagai. He will at once be known as one of the mature men of the tribe. This is not to say that the mere fact of wearing the *ngiyana* gives the right of taking part in the important affairs of the country; the counsellors alone possess this right; but from amongst the " crowned, " will be chosen the man who is sent to another chief to treat of political questions, for instance.

301 When the hair grows (for, though it is curly, it may become long), the crown rises with it and becomes more or less unsteady, which must be most uncomfortable! The best thing would be to cut the ornament off and then replace it. Mr. Mandjia, one of our neighbours at Rikatla, was probably too lazy to undertake this job, so he put a small red handkerchief between his skull and the crown to prevent it from wobbling.

765 At a certain time all the *ngiyana* disappeared from the land of
643 Nondwane. The chief Mapunga was dead! The loss, kept
554 secret for a year, had been made public, and the law requires all the
885 mature men to take off their crowns when the sovereign of the country is dead. They take the wax from the frame, and make a ball of it; this they fix on a little stick, and place this stick in the roof of their hut above the door. The frame is hung up quite close by, and they leave these objects there till the new chief orders his subjects to re-make their crowns. This shows clearly that the crowning custom is in close relation with the national life of the tribe. The " makhehla " also form special battalions in the army.

178 Nowadays, however, this custom is not observed as religiously
554 as in bygone times. Life is harder, one must go and earn pounds sterling in the port of Lourenço Marques, or in the gold mines, and one can no longer indulge in a lazy life! It may therefore happen that a poor man will refuse to wear the crown, and say to

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

643 695 331 The name of the chief is sacred in so far as it is generally used in oaths. When asked to swear, a Nondwane man will say : "Maphunga!" (1)

II. *The Regalia.*

643 Kings everywhere like to adorn themselves with specially imposing objects, insignia of their office, which differentiate them from their subjects. The Thonga chiefs have no peculiar crown — the shidlodlo belonging to all adults (p. 129)—, no special garment, no sceptre and no throne. We sometimes translate by the word throne *shilubelo* viz., the place where one *luba*, pays the tax ; but this is only a hut smaller than the others and subjects can also possess it. (See page 313). However there are, in some of these small kingdoms, royal objects which may be called regalia (bukosi bya hosi).

643 301 Amongst the Nkunas, the chief possesses a large copper bracelet called *ritlatla*, which was bought a very long time ago, in Lourenço Marques, by the Nkuna clan in exchange for tusks of elephants, says Mankhelu. According to others, the ritlatla was made in old times by Natives from the copper, or perhaps from the gold dug by them. The ritlatla was in the hands of the elder branch of the Nkuna clan ; Hoshana was its headman, but he had fled into the Nwamba country during the troubled period of 1855 to 1860. When he died, his people brought the ritlatla to the chief Shiluvane who belonged to a younger branch, thinking that, at his death, the ritlatla together with the chieftainship would be given back to

643 681 (1) Kidd, in his *Kafir Socialism*, has asserted that Bantu chiefs are very jealous and kill their subjects when they become too rich and thus overshadow them. This may be the case in other tribes or when a military government has taken the place of the old patriarchal system. Amongst the Thongas it is not true. My informants could not quote a single instance of a murder committed by a chief for that reason alone. I heard of Shiluvane killing a subject called Muhluhluni who had acquired too much power ; but Muhluhluni had declared that he wanted to usurp the chieftainship ; so it was a case of high treason ! A rich nduna, in the territory of Nhandja (Nondwane), was also killed and his oxen taken by the chief because he had tried to abduct one of the chief's wives. But many headmen had as many oxen as Maphunga and were not troubled by him on that account ; "Why should he hate them ? They could not harm him, as he was protected by the supernatural powers, and they brought him all the more beer as they had plenty of wives and consequently of meshes !"

643 301 them. But they were disappointed in their hope : Shiluvane kept both the ritlatla and the power and bequeathed them to his son, Muhlaba, as we shall see. Legends are current about the ritlatla. It is said to be able to move of its own will. "This piece of metal is indeed a wonderful thing," wrote a young Nkuna, to me "because when it is buried in the soil, as black people are in the habit of doing with their treasures, a piece of iron must be put inside it to prevent it from going away; if this precaution is not taken, the ritlatla may leave the place where it was and go somewhere else. In the space of one year, it may go as far as the Masetana spruit (about one mile)."

643 Another royal property of the Nkuna family was an *elephant's tusk*, which vanquished enemies had brought as a token of their submission.

643 302 787 In Nondwana, the old chief Papele who preceded Maphunga and lived in the middle of the last century, wore a *kind of chignon* or bun made by plaiting his hair, which was a sign of royalty (shifoko). But this custom has passed away. There was also *a long stick* which was kept exposed to the smoke of the royal fire in the sacred hut of *nyokwekulu*, which I shall describe presently, and which was called *ntjobo* and also *mhamba*, viz., offering; this was evidently of religious value to the clan, and was taken outside when the army assembled. It possessed the power of becoming invisible to enemies. Moreover this magical stick was very useful because it warned the clan when some danger was threatening. The ntjobo was then put into a fire; if it did not burn, this showed that the clan had nothing to fear from its enemies ; if it burned, it meant that the clan would be attacked and defeated. Then another stick would be prepared and put into the fire with the hope that it would resist it.

643 777 We shall speak in Part VI of another sacred *mhamba* which most of the Thonga clans possessed, made of the nails and hair of the deceased chiefs in the Tembe clan, and of the dried skin of their faces in the Shirindja clan. It was used as a means of propitiation in national calamities. In the Khosen country, the chief also possessed the *mhamba*. This was a mysterious object which the clan had always possessed, from time immemorial, from the beginning

214 held by his chief Mahazule. He approached us, a giant of 6 ft. in height, decked out in a costume which was certainly grotesque, but of which I at once caught the general idea ; he had evidently tried to resemble a wild animal and had succeeded admirably in the attempt. Such is most likely the origin of the war costume in mankind! As for Charley, he was thoroughly delighted to note the terrorising effect produced by his appearance on the youngsters and folk of weak nerves.

He was, admittedly, the handsomest warrior in our locality, and condescended on one occasion to allow us to photograph him, when he explained in detail the several component parts of his costume, which, as a whole, was certainly formidable! The photograph was a failure, but the get-up has remained imprinted on my memory.

714 To begin with the top ; the head was decorated with three
825 plumes of long slender feathers, taken from a bird called *sakabonyi*, the widow bird, which is only to be found in the mountains ; sometimes the feathers of other birds are added (magalu, mafukwana); one of these plumes is worn in the centre, the others one on each side, and all three are fixed on to a conical helmet (shintlontlo) trimmed with ostrich feathers. This helmet is set on a kind of toque of another skin, which is held in place by a chin-strap. This style of head gear makes the head look about twice the natural size, and, to give it a still more ferocious appearance, it is adorned here and there with porcupine quills.

714 Round his neck Charley wore a necklace of plaited thongs
301 of black calf skin (tinkocho). Armlets of long white ox hairs,
825 carefully selected from the tail, ornamented his biceps, and garters of a similar make were on the calves of his legs.

The belt around his loins was very rich, the beautiful skin of a civet cat (nsimba), with its fine yellow stripes, hanging down in front to the middle of his thighs, and small antelopes skins behind (madjobo ya nhlengane). Finally, to complete the wild animal appearance, calves and ankles were covered with bracelets of large black seeds, which come from the North (timbavu), each seed being as large as a cherry. The size of the legs is thus considerably increased and conveys the idea of a pachyderm ; when he jumped

727 enemy died later on, after his return to his home. Makhani did not
828 know this. One day he became suddenly delirious and rushed about
789 all over the village trying to stab his own people. "Oho!" said those
783 who saw him, "it is because the man he wounded has died!" They at once called the magician who possessed the nuru medicine, a man of the Mapsanganye clan, who came with his calabash. In this calabash there was a carved stick cut from a tree called shiralala, the extremity of which must always remain plunged in the medicine. The magician dipped this stick into a mixture made of honey and the drug, and passed it over the lips of Makhani, who seized it with his tongue, sucking it as the magician moved it from right to left, and licking his lips. A drop of the medicine was then put into each ear, on each upper eye-lid, and below the sternum. He was then cured and, taking a lighted torch, he threw it in the direction of the enemy's country with threatening words : "A ba fe, bafo, ba bola i. e. Let them die, the enemies, let them rot. I will kill still others!" Every day he had to go to the pool and wash his body, treating himself with the tintebe powder.

727 During the weeks following the battle heroes do not only
301 wear the tintebe, besides these miluru amulets, they have the
703 right to wear certain trophies. These are in the first place
554 antelope or goat's horns pierced at the base ; they thread a string through the hole thus made and tie them round their necks (See illustrations, p. 33 and 453). They also make necklaces of small pieces of wood, notched in a peculiar manner and burnt in the fire ; a hole is made through these and they are strung together like beads and worn round the neck. Sometimes these necklaces are made so long that they are worn as a bandoleer. I recollect seeing the Matjolo warriors returning from their expedition of February 1895: they came to show themselves off to the Whites at Lourenço Marques, gloriously proud of having massacred defenceless women and children whom they had surprised in the early hours of the morning! People threw them pieces of silver which they converted into brandy! (1)

727 (1) The terrible malediction which rests on those who have killed an enemy
775 is well illustrated by the following story which the Rev. C. Maphophe told me of an
761 event that had taken place not long ago in the Shishongi country (Manyisa district). A man of the Ndzindzi family had killed a Ndjao during one of Gungunyana's expedi-

177 themselves in the big rug (ngubo, mpisi-mpisi), which they all buy
291 to sleep under at night. The end of the process of evolution will
513 certainly be that they will adopt exactly the same dress as their European masters : a complete suit for the men, frocks, hats and boots for the women ; as soon as the majority of them obtain enough money to buy these, they will do so, and seeing how particular most of them are as regards their external appearance, it may be safely anticipated that Bantu beauties will submit to the tyranny of the London or Paris fashions as readily as our European élégantes!

291 It is easy to see the evolution of dress in the Bantu tribe by comparing the illustration of the South African woman (a Sutho, I. p. 46) representing the first stage, those of the Thonga women (I. p. 179 and 195) representing the second, Camilla, depicting a third stage (p. 92), and the ordinary European frock forming the fourth (1).

As for men, I unfortunately possess no picture of the primitive *mbaya*. But the following stages are illustrated by the two Zulu boys (p. 95) by the habitué of the Nkuna Court (I. p. 435), and by Tobane (I. p. 4) and Muhlaba (I. p. 426).

II. *Ornaments.*

301 The taste for decoration, for ornament, is innate with the Black. Ages ago, before he took to fixing a flower in his hair, he used to tatoo himself. We have already described (I. p. 178) the various patterns of *tattooing* of men and women, and have pointed

177 (1) I must however mention a piece of information which was given to me by two
286 trustworthy authorities, according to which Thongas of the Northern clans possessed in former times a kind of primitive *textile industry*. The Rev. Calvin Maphophe, who belongs to the Hlengwe group, asserted that Natives of the Tshobane clan, near the Sabie river, knew how to weave threads of cotton in order to form a kind of cloth called shombe, and another man of the Bilen plain told me that this cloth was worn by women at a time when men were satisfied with the mbayi. This industry has long since disappeared ; European cloth probably killed it as soon as it became procurable. The presence of subspontaneous plants of cotton in various parts of the country is in favour of this assertion. Where and when did these ancient Thongas obtain the precious textile plant and who taught them to use it? This is an interesting historical point which I am afraid will never be elucidated.

301 out that this custom probably had a social significance in former times, though at present it is practised as an adornment.

302 As regards *hair* (nsisi, mu-mi), women often cut it, men less

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Maputju women with "tingoya." *Photo P. Aubert.*

302 frequently. A man only cuts his hair when his wife dies, as a
[765] sign of mourning : it is a taboo (I. p. 146). In former times they never shaved their beards. People made fun of those who did so, saying : "Are you an Angolese?" (The Angolese, who are numerous in the neighbourhood of Lourenço-Marques,

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Ornaments, calabashes, pottery.

302 The use of ochre is, however, not restricted to nursing mothers
538 or magicians : it is the special province of young marriageable
832 girls, wishing to attract attention : their brilliant skin shines like a mirror, setting off to perfection the white of their eyes and the black of their hair, which is sometimes made flossy by means of antimony or ground charcoal. A quaint saying puts it thus :

> Shindzingeri pundjene ? -Banhwanyana tolan !...
> What says the pretty bird with the coral neck that sings in the grass ?
> It says : Girls, anoint yourselves with ochre ! (if you wish to be as beautiful as it is).

177 Another ornament, of ancient date, is the *bracelet*. There
301 are several kinds : 1) the big heavy copper rings, called *masindana*, which greatly resemble those of the lake-dwellers, having a similar rather oval shape with an opening for slipping them over the wrist ; 2) the modern bracelets, called *busenga*, which the Rongas first bought in Natal, and which the Ma-Lemba introduced in the Northern clans ; they are made of iron wire twined round a ring of hide ; 3) the *mafowa* are more ancient, being made of seeds strung on thongs of skin, and are wound several times round the leg. This is an ornament for either dance or war.
● 301 The mafowa are sometimes made of the silvery cocoons of Argema Mimosae, the Queen Moth, which are found on nkanye trees, emptied of the chrysalis which is inside and filled with grains of millet which rattle when dancing!

301 *Beads* (nkarara) are evidently of later date ; they were introduced
439 by the Whites in the XVIth century, when the Portuguese were already in regular communication with Delagoa Bay and trafficked with the Natives, exchanging glassware for gold and ivory. Glass fascinated the Blacks : its brightness and transparency pleased
539 them immensely. An old song echoes their simple transports of delight :

> E ! Bashabi ! Batatana ba shabile ; ba buya ni shintshirimana sha balungoooo !..
> Hi ! Here come the buyers ! Our fathers return with their purchases ; they bring back with them the beautiful glittering things which the Whites sell !...

301 "A few years ago an ordinary glass bottle was thought a wonder by the people in the interior," said Timoteo Mandlati to me.

(He was a Nkuna from Shiluvane.) It is not strange therefore 301
that they became enamoured of beads. They give them special 832
names, according to colour and size, and succeed in turning them to very good account. The chief ornament the women make, (beadwork is exclusively done by the women), is the *mugangu* (No. 2); used in love-making (gangisa) ; it is a kind of crown of blue beads with red chevrons, worn by girls when they wish to beautify themselves. Some are wide and some narrow ; the beads are strung on threads which are crossed and knotted as the work proceeds : no canvas foundation is used. The bead necklace 301
is called *shihekisana*. Bead bracelets on the wrist are *shibolisa*, and on the ankles *maluvada*. Beads are also used in making large and heavy belts (mugadzi), weighing one to two pounds, and very much appreciated as an ornament when dancing. In the same way calabashes (No. 5) are covered with beads, bags made of hide (No. 4), bottles and even baskets. This bead work calls for a 276
good deal of patience. One of the things which the Ronga most 301
dearly loves to have decorated with beads is his tobacco pouch, (ngulana, No. 3), which is for him not only a means of satisfying his passion for taking snuff, but also one of his most prized ornaments. I do not now refer to the carved ebony tobacco box, worn *en bandoulière*, but to the article consisting of eight or nine large seeds, hollowed out, in which is kept the powder which stimulates the brain. Each of these seeds (which come from another country) is closed with a small piece of reed ; when one is walking they rattle against each other, producing a most delightful sound! The first thing a man will say to a friend on 576
meeting him, will be : "Fole?" — "Tobacco?" and before 276
anything further is said, each will indulge in a pinch. The same act of politeness is essential before beginning any discussion. The Thonga does not smoke the calumet of peace, but uses for a like purpose the many receptacled tobacco pouch, decorated with beads, which hangs from the belt at his hip. He takes from it a pinch of snuff, which he offers to his opponent ; the latter takes another pinch and proceedings then commence under the happiest auspices. Hearts are not far from concord... when noses have already fraternised!

301 Beads are merely an ornament and have no ritual value, except
789 the large white ones used by people possessed by the Ba-Ndjao spirits. (Part VI.)

B. HABITATION.

342 While there has been such a rapid change in Thonga customs regarding dress, — so rapid that in these last fifty years they have changed more in that respect than during the fifty preceding centuries —, in the field of architecture the tribe appears to have stood still ; their huts are built precisely as they were in ancient times. It is true that it is easier to put on a jacket and trousers than to alter the style of one's house : besides it must be admitted that the Thonga hut possesses several advantages. It is comparatively easy to construct, cool in the hot weather, perfectly watertight in the rainy season and is fairly ingeniously contrived.

That which is called *yindlu* (yin-tin) properly speaking, is more especially the *roof* of the hut (lwango, dji-ma) ; for it is the roof which is the most troublesome to make. A strange fact too, and one which appears paradoxical, is that, in the construction (ku yaka) of the house, they begin with the roof!

[341] 335 342 The Thonga architect — and every man is his own in that country — gathers together a few hundred straight sticks, one to one and a half inches in width and from three to ten feet in length. He digs a hole in the ground, a yard and a half in diameter and 16 inches deep, in which he arranges his sticks in a circle, points downwards, at the bottom of the hole, and supported in such a manner that they lie at an angle of 45 degrees with the ground. Any one of these sticks will thus be at about a right angle with the opposite one, and all together they form, as it were, a huge conical basket with its point in the hole. To fasten all the sticks together, he ties them to round hoops (something like cask hoops) made of bent branches. These hoops (balelo, dji-ma) are concentric, very small at the bottom, and getting gradually larger as the work progresses. Any spaces which remain between the sticks first arranged are filled up, one after the other, with

"You see! Stones also grow!" Another Native geologist, who had heard the European story of creation, coming from the Coast, a country of sand and sand only, and visiting the Drakensberg Mountains near Shiluvane, was amazed by the enormous cliffs of the Mamotswiri and gave vent to the following reflection : "No wonder we have no stones in our sandy land. When God created the earth, he used them all to build these mountains!" 823

Fossils are rare in Thongaland, where sand covers almost the whole country. There is however in the southern part of the Maputju region an outcrop of cretaceous rock which belongs to the Gault and which contains ammonites, Nautillus etc. Natives call them *nsongo stones* and are very much afraid of them. They say that "these stones with ribs" can walk. They bring bad luck (singita). Should a child pick up one of these fossils and bring it into the village, he will fall ill ; he must therefore undergo a special treatment. 136 823 777

Crystal greatly pleases the Natives. It is rare in South Africa. When magicians can secure a white or a black crystal they generally wear it round their necks together with the claws, or teeth, of wild animals, or with their little skin bags which they use as amulets. For this reason I once had the good fortune to be able to exchange a crystal I had brought from Switzerland for one of these charms! 135 301

The *earth* (misaba) is also a great and important thing. First because it is identified with the people dwelling on it, with the clan. *Tiko*, the land, means both the soil and the people. Further than this, the earth is the chief (I. p. 382) ; hence many laws : e. g. the tusk of the elephant which fell on the earth when the beast was killed, belongs to the chief, etc. (p. 57). The most solemn oath is that which is taken with earth (ku funga u hahla hi misaba). Should a man be accused of stealing or of being a wizard, if he puts a little earth in his mouth, says *tsu*, and declares : "I do not know anything about it," those who care for his safety will look for a medicine-man to treat him : it is a *mondjo* (a magical method of divination. See Chapter III). The same thing is done when an oath has been taken by sucking a piece of iron. 823 695 787

A curious superstition regarding the earth is this : after moving from one country to another, you should for some days mix with 823